UNITED
NATIONS

S

Security Council

Distr.
GENERAL

S/23331
30 December 1991

ORIGINAL: ENGLISH

REPORT OF THE SECRETARY-GENERAL ON CAMBODIA

1. In resolution 717 (1991) adopted on 16 October 1991, the Security Council decided to establish, under its authority, a United Nations Advance Mission in Cambodia (UNAMIC). It further decided that UNAMIC should be deployed immediately after the signing of the Agreements on a Comprehensive Political Settlement of the Cambodia conflict, in accordance with the recommendations contained in my report S/23097 of 30 September 1991.

2. The Agreements on a Comprehensive Political Settlement of the Cambodia Conflict were signed in Paris on 23 October 1991. In resolution 718 (1991) adopted on 31 October, the Security Council noted that the Agreements provided for the establishment of a United Nations Transitional Authority in Cambodia (UNTAC). It expressed its full support for the Agreements and requested the Secretary-General to submit, at the earliest possible date, a report containing his plan for implementing the mandate envisaged in the Agreements, on the understanding that this report would be the basis on which the Council would authorize the establishment of UNTAC.

3. On 14 November 1991, I reported to the Council (S/23218) that UNAMIC had begun to discharge its functions and that its deployment was expected to be completed by mid-December. The mandate of UNAMIC provides, inter alia, for the establishment of a mine-awareness programme which is to be implemented by small teams of military personnel with experience in training civilian populations on how to avoid injuries from mines or booby-traps. Initially, the teams are to give priority to populations living in or close to areas of recent military confrontation. In due course, this initial programme is to be expanded into those foreseen in the Paris Agreements, giving priority, in consultation with the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), to repatriation routes, reception centres and resettlement areas.

4. In this connection, annex 1, section C, pararaph 1 (e), of the Paris Agreements provides that UNTAC would undertake, among other measures, "assisting with clearing mines and undertaking training programmes in mine clearance and a mine-awareness programme among the Cambodia people". 1/

5. Annex 2, article IX, of the same Agreements provides that:

"1. Soon after arrival in Cambodia, the military component of UNTAC shall ensure, as a first step, that all known minefields are clearly marked.

"2. The Parties agree that, after completion of the regroupment and cantonment processes in accordance with Article III of the present annex, they will make available mine-clearing teams which, under the supervision and control of UNTAC military personnel, will leave the cantonment areas in order to assist in removing, disarming or deactivating remaining unexploded ordnance devices. Those mines or objects which cannot be removed, disarmed or deactivated will be clearly marked in acordance with a system to be devised by the military component of UNTAC.

"3. UNTAC shall:

"(a) Conduct a mass public education programme in the recognition and avoidance of explosive devices;

"(b) Train Cambodian volunteers to dispose of unexploded ordnance devices;

"(c) Provide emergency first-aid training to Cambodian volunteers." 2/

6. Since the adoption of the Paris Agreements and the entry into force of a formal cease-fire, there has been a growing sense in the international community of the need to undertake, on an urgent basis, a major de-mining effort in Cambodia. It has been suggested that such an effort should begin even before the establishment of UNTAC, so as to take advantage of the present dry season and to prepare the ground for the safe and orderly repatriation of Cambodian refugees and displaced persons under United Nations auspices.

7. I have accordingly decided to recommend to the Security Council that the mandate of UNAMIC be expanded to include training in mine clearance and the initiation of a de-mining programme. These activities would be undertaken on the following basis: the existing UNAMIC mine-awareness programme would immediately be developed to include training of Cambodian personnel in mine detection and mine clearance; for this purpose the strength of the existing unit would be increased with additional expert personnel contributed by Member States. Concurrently, a de-mining programme would be initiated by a specialized military unit provided by a Member State on an urgent basis, with a view to taking maximum advantage of the present dry season. This programme would be concentrated in the northwestern part of Cambodia and would give priority, in consultation with UNHCR, to repatriation routes, reception centres and areas where refugees and displaced persons will be resettled. The programme would also incude an engineering (construction) component, to repair the roads which have been cleared of mines and to ensure that the roads and bridges to be used by returnees are safe and able to sustain the expected increase in the volume of traffic.

8. As members of the Security Council are aware, I recently despatched a military survey mission to Cambodia in order to prepare a plan for implementing the mandate envisaged for the military component of UNTAC in the Paris Agreements. The mission, which was led by my Military Adviser, Major-General Timothy K. Dibuama, has advised me, in the light of the information provided by the Cambodian parties and of its discussions with a UNHCR mission which was currently in Cambodia to identify possible resettlement areas, that, in order to undertake the mine training and de-mining tasks described above, UNAMIC would need:

(a) A planning and liaison unit at its headquarters in Phnom Penh. This unit would liaise with the National Mine Clearance Commission recently established by the Supreme National Council of Cambodia, as well as with UNHCR, other international organizations, Governments and non-governmental organizations concerned, in order to gather all available information on land mines in Cambodia and facilitate the marking of all known minefields as a matter of urgency. The proposed unit would develop a training programme for Cambodians in the fields of mine-detection and mine-clearance. It would also elaborate plans for de-mining activities, determine the priorities for their execution and allocate the work to be undertaken by de-mining units;

(b) A field engineer battalion to initiate the mine-clearing of repatriation routes, reception centres and resettlement areas, and to carry out emergency repair and rehabilitation work of roads and bridges which had been cleared of mines. First priority would be given to those roads that are to be used by the first group of returnees;

(c) Expert training teams to train Cambodian military personnel, who would be made available by the four Cambodian parties, to participate under supervision of UNAMIC in the mine-clearing of repatriation routes, reception centres and resettlement areas;

(d) Logistic support personnel to meet the second line transport and fuel requirements of the engineer unit and the mine-clearing training teams and to provide the necessary communications support.

9. It is estimated that approximately 40 military personnel would be required for the planning and liaison unit at UNAMIC headquarters. The engineer unit would need a total strength of about 700. The expert training and supervisory teams would require about 200 all ranks. About 150 logistic support personnel would be required. These military personnel, totalling approximately 1,000, would be provided by Member States. The engineer unit would need to be an integrated unit with all the equipment required for its activities. It has to be emphasized, however, that, in Cambodia's present devastated condition, the movement of the engineer unit and its heavier equipment to its place of operation in Cambodia would give rise to formidable difficulties. It would also be necessary for the unit concerned to enjoy a very high level of self-sufficiency in supply, shelter, transport and communications.

10. I shall submit as soon as possible, as an addendum to the present report, a statement of the financial and administrative implications of the proposed expansion of UNAMIC's mandate. Meanwhile, it is my duty to inform the Security Council that, in view of the present financial situation of the Organization, it will not be possible to undertake the activities proposed in this report until the necessary cash resources become available.

11. It is generally recognized that a major de-mining effort is needed in Cambodia. While the total eradication of mines will necessarily be a long-term endeavour, the initial programme recommended in this report should be undertaken on an urgent basis, in order to make an early start to tackle this problem before the beginning of the rainy season in May. This would enable UNAMIC to reduce the threat posed by mines to the civilian population and to begin to prepare the ground for a safe and orderly repatriation of the refugees and displaced persons under United Nations auspices. It would also facilitate the timely deployment of UNTAC and the discharge of its responsibilities throughout Cambodia.

Notes

1/ See A/46/608.

2/ Ibid.